



**INFORMATION
REGARDING
ANIMAL BITES
AND RABIES**

WHAT TO DO WHEN BITTEN BY AN ANIMAL

1. Consult a health care provider regarding the bite. Depending on the situation, special wound care, antibiotics, or immunizations may be needed.
2. Report the bite to Seattle Animal Control at (206) 386-4254 ext. 2 or the Seattle Police Department at 911.
3. If the bite occurred while outside Seattle, call the appropriate local animal control authority.

FIRST AID FOR ANIMAL BITES

1. Wash out the bite with soap and running water. If redness, swelling, pain or fever develops over the next week see your health care provider.
2. Call your health care provider if you have questions about your need for additional medical treatments, especially if you develop swelling, pain or fever.
3. If the bite is from a bat, bear, coyote, cougar, skunk, raccoon, bobcat or another wild carnivore, ask your health care provider immediately if rabies vaccination is needed.
4. If the bite is from a dog, cat, or ferret and the animal can be identified and observed, make sure that animal control and the animal's owner keep the animal under rabies observation for at least 10 days after the bite occurred. If these animals develop rabies symptoms during this period, the animal should be tested for rabies, and the bite victim should begin rabies vaccination treatment. This treatment can be stopped if the animal is found not to have rabies.
5. If the bite is from a dog, cat, or ferret and the animal is not available for observation, an individual assessment of the rabies risk should occur. This assessment should be done by a health care provider.
6. Check the tetanus vaccination history of the person who was bitten. If it has been more than 5 years since the last booster dose, another tetanus booster may be needed. Health care providers can make this decision.
7. If the bite victim needs rabies vaccination treatment, health care providers and emergency rooms can arrange for this treatment.

CONTACT SEATTLE ANIMAL CONTROL

- ◆ Report the bite to Seattle Animal Control at (206) 386-4254 ext.2.
- ◆ If known, provide a description of the animal and the owner's information.
- ◆ Request a case number for your records.

Upon receipt of your complaint, an Animal Control Officer will be dispatched to conduct an investigation. This will involve taking statements from victims, witnesses and contacting the animal's owner. If the animal bite broke the skin, the animal will be quarantined for ten (10) days pursuant to Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 9.12.

If the animal is still loose and cannot be located or captured, Animal Control Officers will attempt to locate and capture the animal by patrolling the neighborhood. You are also asked to assist us in locating the animal by inquiring with neighbors and patrolling the vicinity also.

Upon completion of the investigative report and quarantine period, Seattle Animal Control will determine if any administrative and/or criminal action will be pursued against the owner of the animal. You will be notified in the event that such action is pursued.

RABIES FACTS

(Information excerpted from publications of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Control of Communicable Diseases Manual)

Rabies is caused by a virus which is found in the saliva of infected animals. Once the rabies virus gets into the nervous system it travels along the nerves until it reaches the spinal cord and brain. Rabies is almost always fatal. Rabies symptoms include: apprehension or fear, headache, fever, body aches, excitability, numbness, paralysis, difficulty swallowing, delirium, and seizures. These symptoms can occur as early as 9 days or as late as 7 years after the rabies exposure occurred. The usual time between rabies exposure and symptoms is 3 to 8 weeks.

Rabies occurrence in pets and livestock living in the United States decreased markedly in the 1940s and 1950s. As a result, human rabies cases also declined. In 1950 for example, 4,979 cases of rabies were reported among dogs, and 18 cases were reported among humans. Between 1980 and 1997, 95 to 247 cases were reported each year among dogs living in the United States, and on average only two human cases were reported each year in which rabies was attributable to variants of the virus associated with dogs living in the United States. Thus, the likelihood of human exposure to a rabid animal in the United States has decreased greatly. However, during the same period, 12 cases of human rabies were attributed to variants of the rabies virus associated with dogs from outside the United States. Therefore, international travelers to areas where dog rabies is still present have an increased risk of exposure to rabies.

Rabies among wildlife, especially raccoons, skunks, and bats, has become more prevalent since the 1950s, accounting for greater than 85% of all reported cases of animal rabies every year since 1976. Rabies among wildlife occurs throughout the continental United States and only Hawaii remains consistently rabies free. Wildlife is the most important potential source of infection for both humans and domestic animals in the United States. Since 1980, a total of 21 (58%) of the 36 human cases of rabies diagnosed in the United States have been associated with bat rabies. In Washington State bats represent the most likely source of human exposure to rabies. It has been at least 2 decades since the last domestic dog or cat in the state tested positive for rabies. Twelve (33%) of the 36 human rabies deaths reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from 1980 through 1997 appear to have been related to rabid animals outside the United States.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF RABIES EXPOSURE

1. Don't handle wild animals, especially bats. Teach your children never to touch or handle bats, even dead ones. Have your children tell an adult if they find a bat at home, at school or with a pet:
 - If you see a wild animal, leave it alone.
 - Do not keep wild animals as pets.
2. Keep bats out of your living space. Find tips for batproofing your home at:
www.healthlinks.washington.edu/nwcphp/rabies/
3. Protect your pets (dogs, cats & ferrets) from getting rabies by making sure their rabies vaccines are current.
4. Pre-exposure vaccination for humans: Recommended for travelers planning to be more than 30 days in an area of the world where rabies is a constant threat. Recommended for persons with jobs involving risk of rabies exposure.

Public Health Assistance

1. If pets or livestock have been bitten by another animal, please consult a veterinarian for assistance. The Public Health Veterinarian can also be consulted by calling (206) 296-4880, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm.

2.If your health care provider needs advice on whether the bite situation might need rabies vaccination treatment, please have the health care provider call 206-296-4774.

3.Recorded information about bats and rabies can be found by calling 206-296-4949, select 9, then select 3. The same information can be found on the World Wide Web:

<http://www.metrokc.gov/health/prevcont/bats.htm>

To obtain a copy of the Seattle Animal Control investigative report and/or quarantine notice pursuant to the Washington State Public Disclosure Act, submit your request in writing to:

Seattle Animal Control
Attn: Public Disclosure Officer
2061 15th Avenue West
Seattle, Washington 98119

SEATTLE MUNICIPAL CODES PERTAINING TO ANIMAL BITES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

9.25.049 Rabies Vaccination Required

All dogs and cats four (4) months of age or older shall be vaccinated against rabies.

9.25.084 Offenses Relating To Control

A. It is unlawful for the owner to permit an animal, except cats and pigeons, to be at large or trespass upon the property of another.....

9.25.083 Owning Dangerous Animals Prohibited-Exception

A. It is unlawful to own a dangerous animal (other than a licensed guard or attack dog) with knowledge that the animal is dangerous, or with reckless disregard of the fact that the animal is dangerous.

B. An animal whose owner is convicted of or pleads guilty to violating this section shall be humanely destroyed.

12A.06.060 Negligent Control Of An Animal

A. A person is guilty of Negligent Control Of An Animal if he or she has possession, custody or control of an animal that, because of the person's negligence, inflicts bodily injury on another person.

B. "Negligence" includes, but is not limited to, failure to comply with or violation of any provision of **Section 9.25.083** or **Section 9.25.084**.

C. Negligent Control Of An Animal is a gross misdemeanor.

RESOURCES

Seattle Animal Control

- ◆ Main Telephone Number (206) 386-4254 ext. 2
- ◆ Enforcement Supervisors (206) 386-4288 Days and (206) 386-4289 Evenings
- ◆ Animal Care Supervisor (206) 386-4292

Public Health Seattle & King County

- ◆ Public Health Veterinarian (206) 296-4880
- ◆ Communicable Disease Control, Epidemiology and Immunizations (206) 296-4774

Washington State Department of Public Health

- ◆ Public Health Veterinarian (360) 236-3362

Seattle Animal Control: www.cityofseattle.net/rca/animal

Public Health Seattle & King County: www.metrokc.gov/health/

Washington State Department Of Health: www.doh.wa.gov/Topics/topics.htm

References For Health Care Providers

Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/epo/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00056176.htm

Rabies Treatment Assessment: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v284n8rfull/joc00308.html>

Rabies Vaccination Treatment: www.metrokc.gov/health/phnr/rabiesqa.htm

